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Towards enhancing Tour Guide professionalism in Tanzania through a Tour Guide Portal

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Abstract

Tourism is an important sector for the development of the economy of the country. It contributes directly and indirectly to Gross Domestic Product, employment generation and source of foreign currency. Tour guiding is one of the special ingredients for the growth of tourism in any nation. The professionalism of tour guides directly affects the tourist satisfaction and hence the growth of the sector. Several efforts have been done so far to enhance the professionalism of tour guides in Tanzania, however, there is no baseline information about this group which can be used as a basis for an enhancement of professionalism. Moreover, there are pieces of evidence of unprofessionalism conducts among tour guides. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods, this study elaborates the current practices of tour guides in Tanzania and how the development of tour guide portal will enhance the professionalism of tour guides. The findings have shown that there are many tour guides with different knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences. However, it is difficult to identify which guide is most suitable for a particular tourist destination or activity. Furthermore, most guides can communicate using at least one foreign language, however, the language proficiency levels need to be established. Although licensing and certification have been used in different places to enhance the professionalism of tour guides, user-generated contents from customers can complement these methodologies. This study concluded that a tour guide portal is an important tool for enhancing professionalism among tour guides through creating baseline information of tour guides in Tanzania, recognizing, registering, facilitating the license application as well as enabling feedback systems through user-generated contents from both, service providers and consumers of tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, tour guide, professionalism, portal, user-generated content

Introduction

Tourism is among the sectors that grow very fast in Tanzania and on the globe. It contributes directly and indirectly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism contributed about 10.4% of global GDP and generated about 9.9% of global employment in 2017 (WTTC, 2018b). Whereas in Tanzania for the same year, the sector contribution was about 9.0%



of total GDP, 26% of total foreign exchange earnings and 8.2% of total employment (WTTC, 2018a).

Despite the vital role the tourism sector plays in sustainable development and alleviation of poverty, the tourism value chain in Tanzania has several gaps. For instance, the World Economic Forum (2017) reported that although Tanzania is 8th in natural resources and wildlife endowment globally, however, it ranks 91st in travel and tourism competitiveness index. Among the missing links in this value chain is the Tour Guide (TG). In fact, a TG's role is vital in the tourism sector. They are ambassadors of the nation in tourism (Holloway, 1981). They are the first to welcome and the last to bid a farewell to a tourist. They stay with tourists, point out the way to follow and leads on the tour to a specific location (Cohen, 1985, Geva and Goldman, 1991). Furthermore, a TG can influence the tourist to revisit the nation by promoting the destination and recommending the duration of stay (Ap and Wong, 2001). Despite their importance, however, there are very few studies that discuss practices of tour guides in Tanzania and, furthermore, there is no study that discusses the enhancement of professionalism of TG in Tanzania.

Recently, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) and other tourism stakeholders have recognized the contribution of TG in the tourism value chain. Each one, in different ways, has seen the importance of professionalism in the guiding profession and how it can raise the service quality TG are offering in the tourism sector. For instance, in 2015, the ministry approved the TG regulation that elaborates on registration of TG, licensing procedures, code of conduct and operations of TG. This regulation requires registered guides to continually develop their profession by attending guiding courses organized by recognized institutions. Furthermore, the regulations give power to Director of Tourism within the ministry to register and maintain the records of all TG as well as deregister any TG who contravene the provisions of the Tourism Act (MNRT, 2015). Additionally, from 2016, Tanzania Tour Guide Awards started a system of recognizing and rewarding the field service providers such as guides, cooks, and porters who have been outstandingly professional in order to encourage and foster professionalism among guides. In this event which runs annually, the candidates are nominated by guides themselves and voted by both members of various TG associations and other tourism stakeholders in Tanzania (Tanzania Tour Guides Awards, 2016).

In spite of these efforts, however, the professionalism and standard of offered service by some of the guides are still questionable. For instance, the annual report of the association of tour operators indicated that some of the tourists are not satisfied with the ability of elaboration and interpretation of things done by TG (TATO, 2017). The complaints of unethical practices among guides such as reckless driving, wildlife feeding and misinterpretation of cultural activities are still there (Robi, 2017, Melubo, 2017). Furthermore, there are lots of guides in Tanzania with a different attitude, skills, and knowledge (Melubo and Buzinde, 2016), however, there is no baseline information about this group. In such situations, therefore, the need to have a TG portal that will facilitate identification, registration and licensing of TG across Tanzania is apparent.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been used to transform how tourism is conducted worldwide through information searching and sharing, purchasing decision and marketing. ICT has led to increasing of user-generated contents (UGC) such as blogs, social media, discussion forums, and virtual communities. This has resulted in a massive increase in information sources which has caused searching tools to become inevitable when tourists are planning for their safaris (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2015). Tourists use ICT to get reliable, accurate and relevant information through the internet, social media and online reviews (Law et al., 2014, Toh et al., 2011). In purchasing decision, ICT can empower the consumer to decide which airline to use, the hotel to book, the destination to visit or which product to buy (Chiappa, 2013). Tourists also use UGC to share photos and information about the places they visited. On another side, the



suppliers of tourism products use ICT to brand and promote their destination using social media, websites, and internets (Molinillo et al., 2018, Jeong et al., 2012). The shared UGC produced by tourists, TG, tour organization or complete strangers is intended to share experiences, knowledge, and to educate other tourists or TG. In recent years, several websites have been developed to promote TG, however, they are lacking some features that would enhance the professionalism and competence of these guides.

In these contexts, therefore, this paper wants to demonstrate the current practices of TG in Tanzania and how the TG portal can be used to enhance the professionalism of these guides.

The remaining structure of this paper is as follows: first, the related work discusses the professionalism of TG and TG portals. Next, the methodology used to collect and analyse data is described, followed by results and discussion. Then, the proposed system that will enhance professionalism is presented and lastly, the article concludes with major findings and future work.

Related work

The literature on the related work highlights how professionalism is important to tour guiding work, what are the approaches of enhancing and how can it be enhanced using ICT.

Professionalism in tour guiding is very important and has brought attention to many researchers (Alani and Khan, 2017, Ap and Wong, 2001, Mak et al., 2011, Prakash and Chowdhary, 2010, Weiler and Ham, 2002, Lai, 2014). Lai (2014) argued that professionalism affects service quality and tourist satisfaction. On top of that, Pereira (2015) adds that tourist satisfaction is intangible and depends on tourists' expectations and the personal judgment of the service. If his perception (judgment) exceeds what he expected, then he will be satisfied, otherwise, he will be dissatisfied. The professionalism of a TG as argued by Prakash and Chowdhary (2010) and Pereira (2015) can create or ruin the image of a destination, tour companies, and the country. Hence, it is important for employers of TG such as tour operators, tourist destinations and travel agencies to make sure that their TG are professional, motivated and receive enough training for higher tourist satisfaction.

Different authors propose different approaches to enhance and maintain professionalism among guides. Mak et al. (2011) propose to use normal methods of quality assurance such as accreditation, certification and licensing a TG who has acquired certain qualities. Both Ap and Wong (2001) and Weiler and Ham (2001) consider TG to have codes of conduct, a good licensing system, and the carrier path that is clear and continuously developed. Whereas Black and Ham (2005) underpin the importance of ethics, tour guide associations, awards to the outstanding guides, licensing and professional certification in enhancing the TG's professionalism, Ap and Wong (2001) point out the right attitude toward work, good communication skills, and proper product knowledge. Most of the enhancements proposed above can be found in Tanzania except licensing, which is in preparation as well as professional certification.

Depending on a country setting, the enhancement of professionalism is slightly different. Training can be through a normal education system followed by licensing as is the case of many European countries such as Britain and France (Chowdhary and Prakash, 2008b) or special courses prepared for TG as in Tanzania. While in India TG are trained and licensed at local, state and regional level (Chowdhary and Prakash, 2008b), in Taiwan there is only certification examination without training requirement (Lan, 2000). Furthermore, Tsegaw and Teressa (2017) argue that enforcement of regulations is important in the enhancement of professionalism.

In support of a licensing system, Chowdhary and Prakash (2008a) suggested the development of TG portal in India as the means to recognize the licensed TG. They further described the benefits of this portal such as enabling tourists to search and contact the TG; acting as the library for the dissemination of learning information and as marketing and promotion tool for TG's competencies, experiences, and expertise. However, they didn't mention the feedback system through UGC within portal such as rating and reviewing of TG by their customers.

A decade after Chowdhary and Prakash (2008a) proposed a TG portal in India, many organizations such as tour guide associations, governments, and private organizations have implemented TG portals for different reasons. Most of the private organization portals register and promote TG with the means of a UGC from customers through reviewing guides; however, they are not checking who is eligible and who is not. Any person claiming to be a TG can register in these portals. In some countries, tour guide associations or governments have developed portals that are registering their TG and have means of validation before registration, for example in Singapore, Israel, and Austria. However, these portals were created in the settings of and for the TG in a particular country. Table 2.1 summarizes features of some of these TG portals.

Table 0.1: Features of related tour guide portals

Website	Operates in	Features						
		Validate members before registration	promote tour guides	Search for guide	Discussion forum for guides and customers	Guides can search for learning materials	Customer can review and rate guides	Apply for the license within the portal
www.visittanzania.co.tz	Tanzania		√					
www.toursbylocals.com	Global		√	√			√	
www.withlocals.com	Global		√	√			√	
tourguides.viator.com/	Global		√	√			√	
Singapore Tour Guide Directory	Singapore	√	√	√				√
Israel Tour Guide Portal [www.israel-guides.net]	Israel	√	√					
Austrian Tour Guides Association [findaguide.at]	Austria	√	√	√				
Proposed Tanzania Tour Guide Portal	Tanzania	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

This study, therefore, elaborates the current practices of TG in Tanzania and how the development of TG portal can help to enhance the professionalism of TG in Tanzania.

Materials and Methodology

Study Area

The geographic area of this study is the northern tourism circuit of Tanzania. This is the most famous circuit in Tanzania with popular tourist destinations such as Serengeti, Mount Kilimanjaro, and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. It attracts about 80% of international visitors visiting Tanzania (Hunt and Gorenflo, 2018, Bayliss et al., 2014). Figure 3.1 shows the map of Tanzania with labelled northern circuit tourist destinations



Figure 0.1: Map of Tanzania with northern circuit tourist destinations adapted from Lonely Planet (2019) website.

Sample Size

A total of 146 respondents responded to questionnaires, 84 of them were tour guides and 62 were tourists. The questionnaires were prepared and distributed using google forms and data were imported and analysed using the python package. Further, 7 tour guides, 5 tourists and 3 tour guide instructors were interviewed.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected between January to April 2019 at the geographical study area using questionnaires, interviews, and document review.

The questionnaires were distributed to TG and tourists to find out the current practices of TG in Tanzania and to understand the requirement of the portal in the perspectives of both TG and tourists. Both closed and open-ended questions were employed in the questionnaire. All questions in the questionnaire were independent variables. The dependent variables evaluated were whether the portal can be an important tool for managing TG in Tanzania and whether this tool can help in increasing professionalism among TG in Tanzania.

The semi-structured interview was employed during data collection to get more insights into the current practices of TG and whether a TG portal can be a useful tool for the promotion of professionalism of TG in Tanzania. The interviewing of both TG and tourists was performed at Ngorongoro gate and inside Serengeti national park at the resting area. The interviewees were

selected randomly after they finish answering the questionnaire. Whereas instructors were interviewed at their respective college premises, one instructor was from College of African Wildlife Management (CAWM), Mweka (Kilimanjaro, Tanzania) and another was from Professional Tour Guide School (PROTS), Arusha. CAWM is government owned and among the leading tour guiding college in Tanzania (Anderson, 2015) while PROTS is privately owned with experience in tour guiding and leadership training (PROTS, 2011). Two questions that were asked were What are your opinion regarding the practices and professionalism of tour guides in Tanzania? Can we enhance tour guide professionalism by developing a TG portal?

The document review was performed to understand the legal standing of TG registration and licensing in Tanzania and therefore to get system requirements of the portal. The document reviewed were Tanzania Tourism Policy of 1999, The Tanzania Tourism Act of 2008 and Tourism (Tour Guiding) Regulation of 2015.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results were obtained from questionnaires, interviews and document review

Results from the Questionnaire

Demography of TG

The aim of this section was to understand the demography of TG in Tanzania. Figure 2.1 and 2.2 presents the gender and age of tour guides in Tanzania. The results showed that the profession of TG is mostly practiced by the male (98.8%) (see figure 4.1) aged between 18 years to 39 years (80.2%) (see figure 4.2).

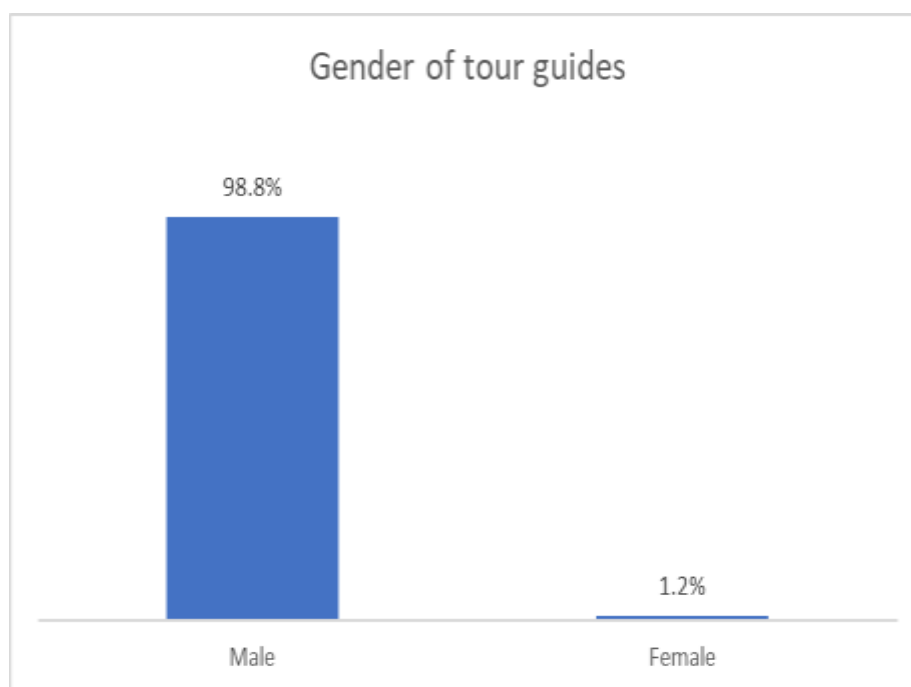


Figure 0.1: Gender of Tour Guides

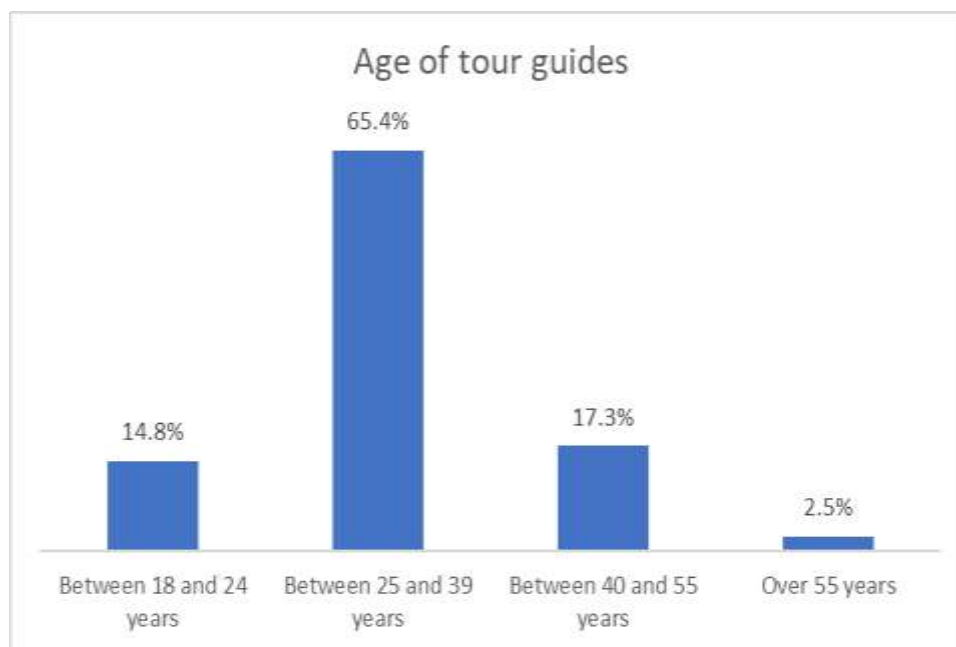


Figure 0.2: Age of tour guides in Tanzania

Education Level of TG

Education contributes to the competence of tour guides. In this section we wanted to know the highest education level of TG, the courses they have studied, the nature of this course and the second profession apart from tour guiding. Figure 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 presents the results.

The results show that most guides studied regular courses (75%) compared to short courses (25%) (see figure 4.3).

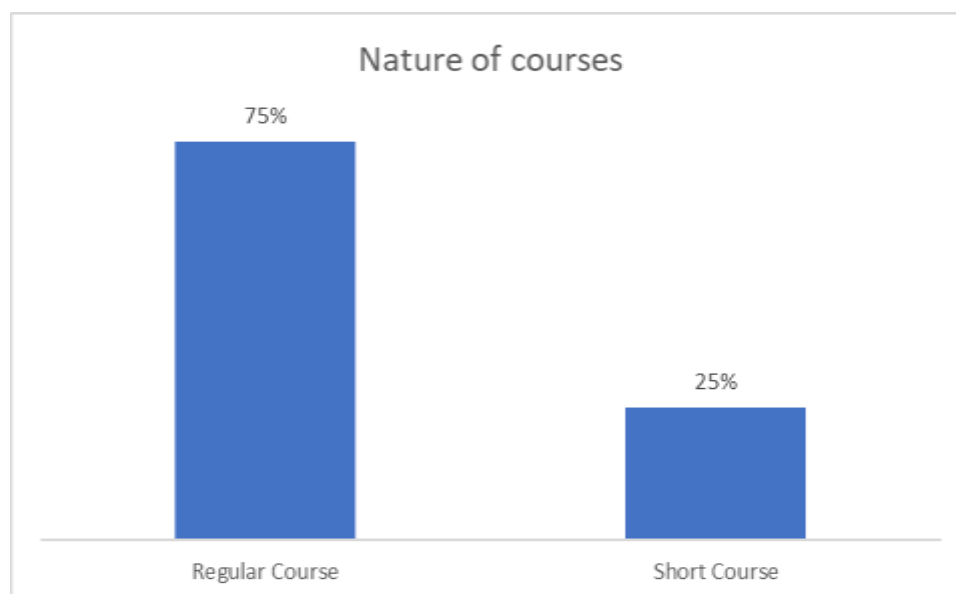


Figure 0.3: Nature of courses studied by tour guides

For most participants, the highest education level is a diploma (30.9%) and certificate (32.1%) (see figure 4.4) and about 40% did not study any tourism-related course at all (see figure 4.5).

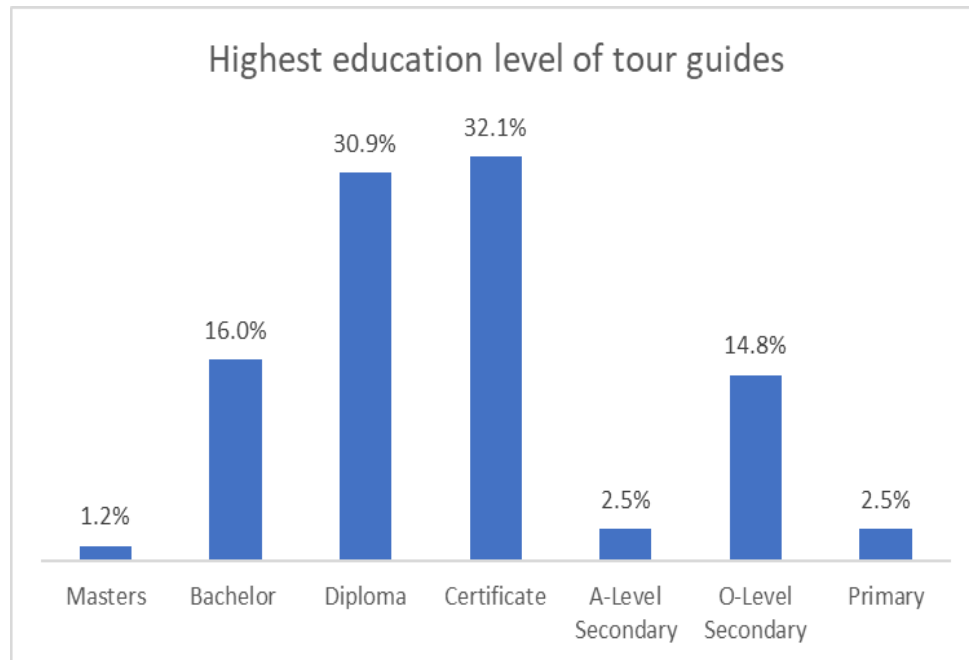


Figure 0.4: Highest education level of tour guides

For those who studied tourism-related courses, 28% studied tour guiding operations and 16% studied tourism and travel management (see figure 4.5).

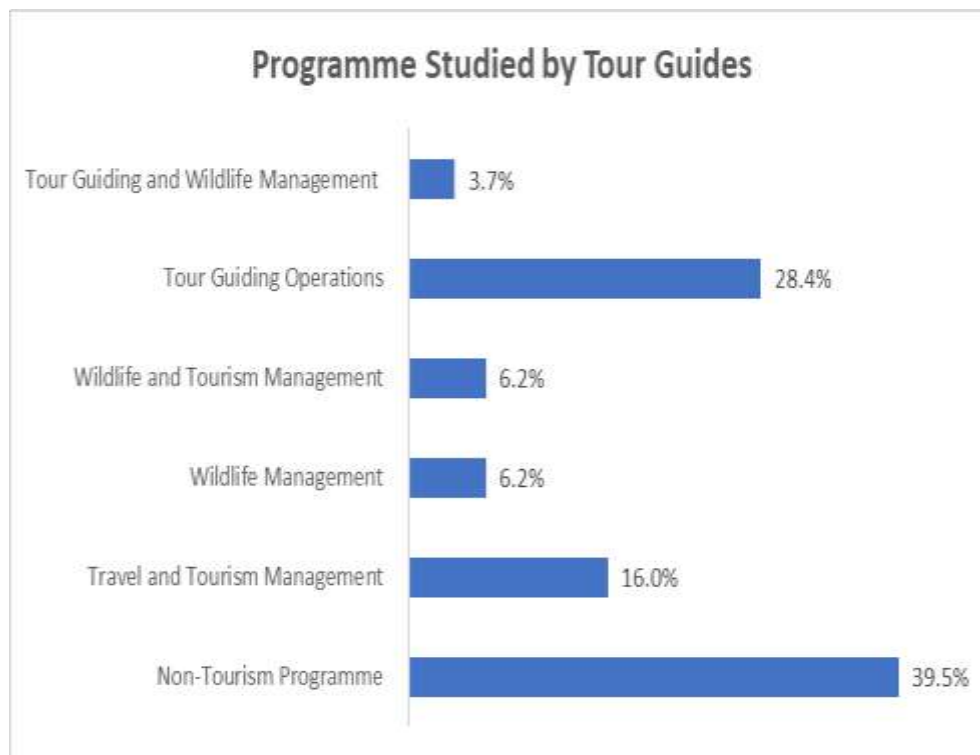


Figure 0.5: Programmes studied by the tour guide

In the case of the second profession, most guides studied driving and mechanics (36.8%), tourism (19.3%) and accounting and finance (15.8%)

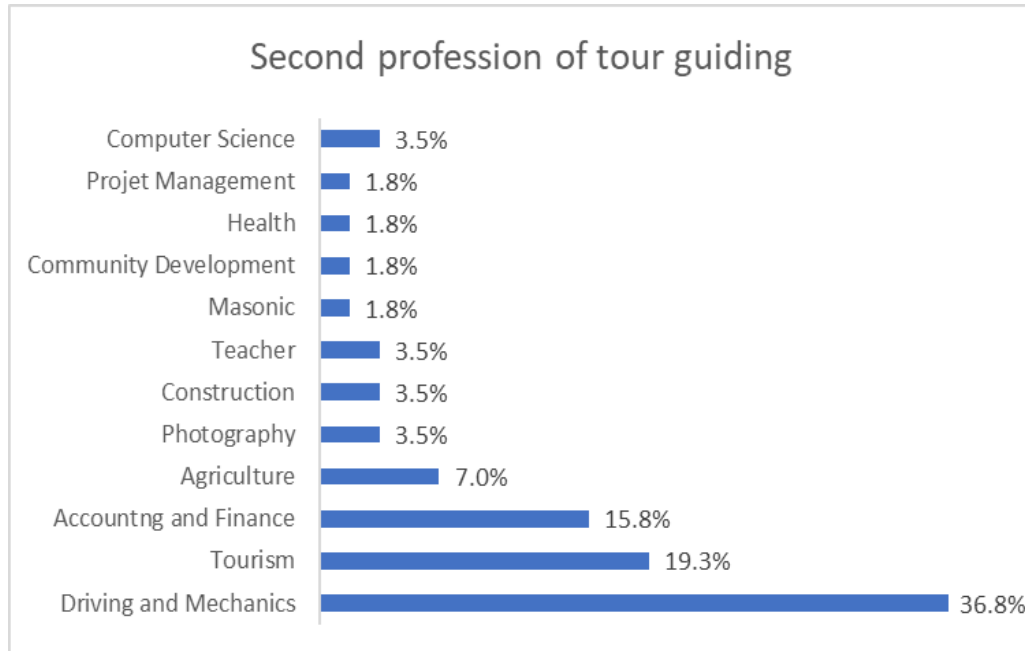


Figure 0.6: Second profession of tour guides

Learning Material

On what kinds of learning material to be included in the portal, most guides suggested wildlife (83.3%), business planning (52.6%) and destination knowledge (51.3%) (see figure 4.7)

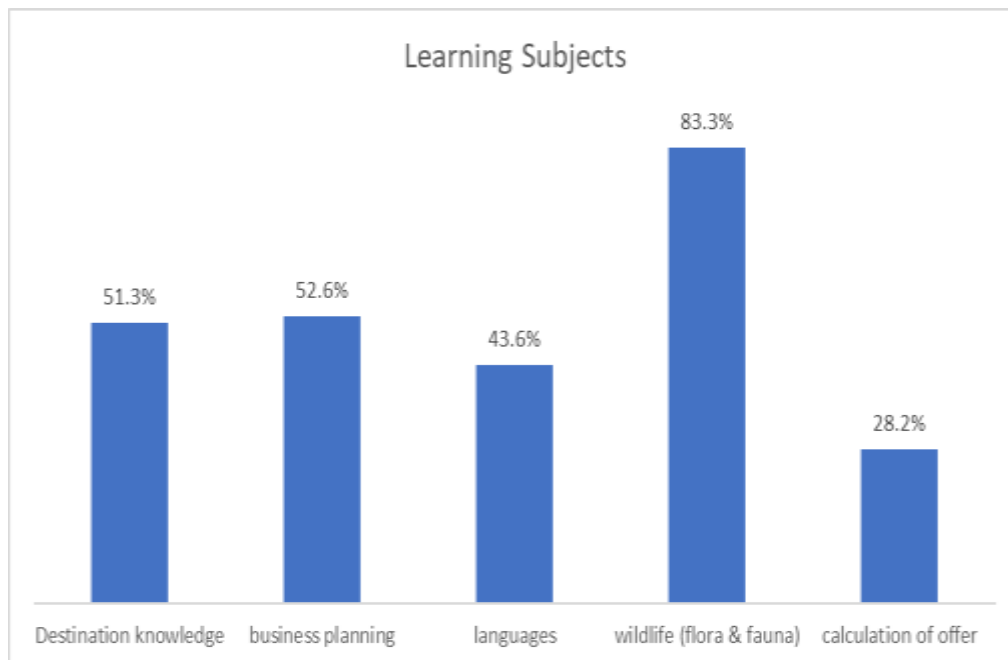


Figure 0.7: Learning subjects preferred by tour guides

On which topics to be included in the discussion forum of the portal, guides preferred wildlife (67.5%), marketing and promotions (63.8%), conservation issues (51.3%), business (48.8%) and national parks (47.5%) (see figure 4.8)

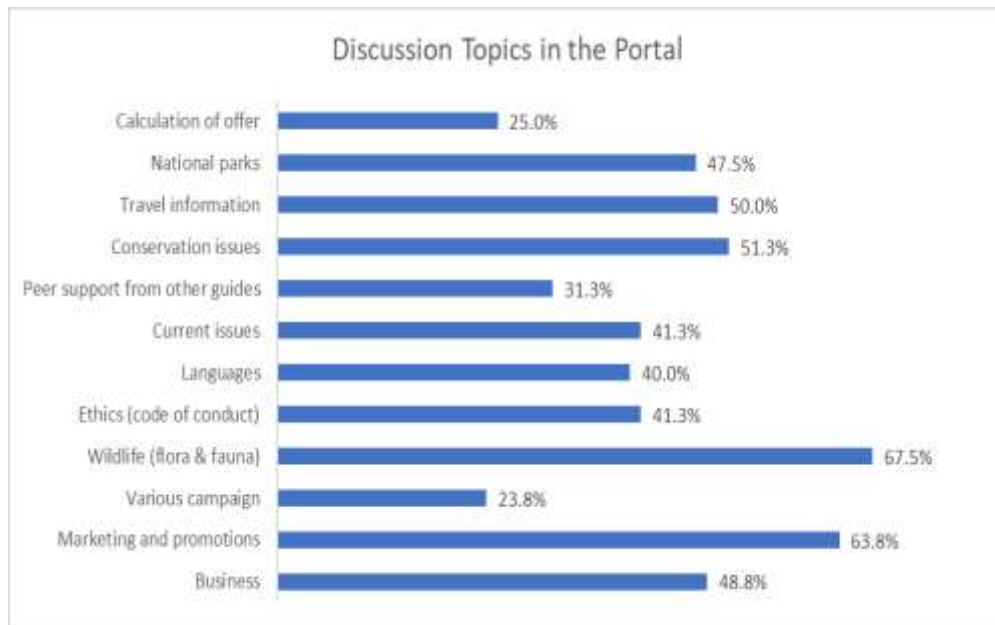


Figure 0.8: Discussion topics suggested by tour guides

Experience of tour guides

The aim was to understand the competence of guides in terms of their experience. Thus, we asked them about the number of years they have worked as tour guides, their guiding category, and employer. Figure 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 present the result of guides working experience.

Results revealed that most guides in Tanzania are well experienced with more than 5 years (49.4%) of working as guides. Nonetheless, there are 24.1% of guides with experience of less than one year (see figure 4.9).



Figure 0.9: Experience of guiding work

Among the surveyed guide, the largest category is a safari guide (70.4%) followed by a mountain guide (24.7%) (see figure 4.10).

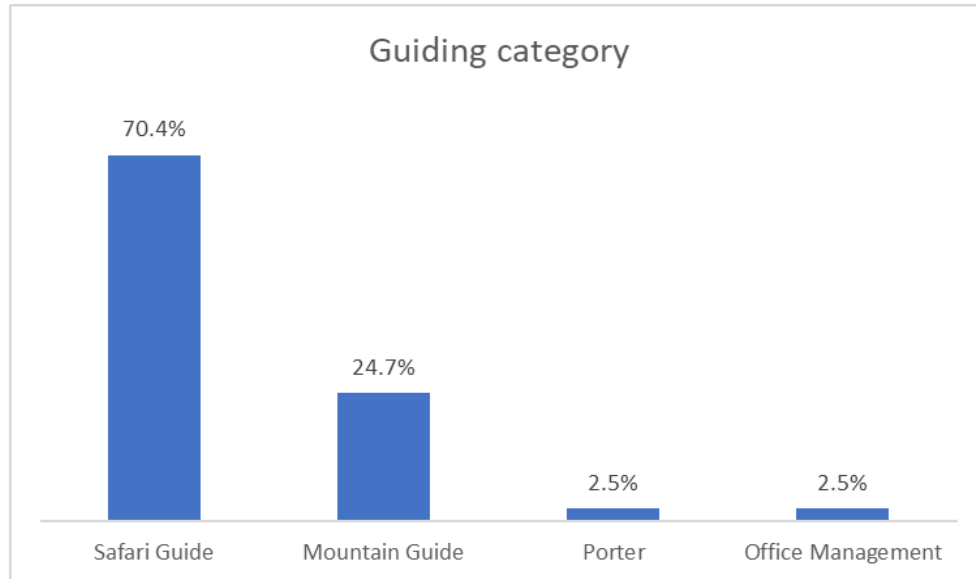


Figure 4.10: Category of guides in Tanzania

From respondents, most were employed by private companies (60.5%) or self-employed (35.8%) (see figure 4.11).

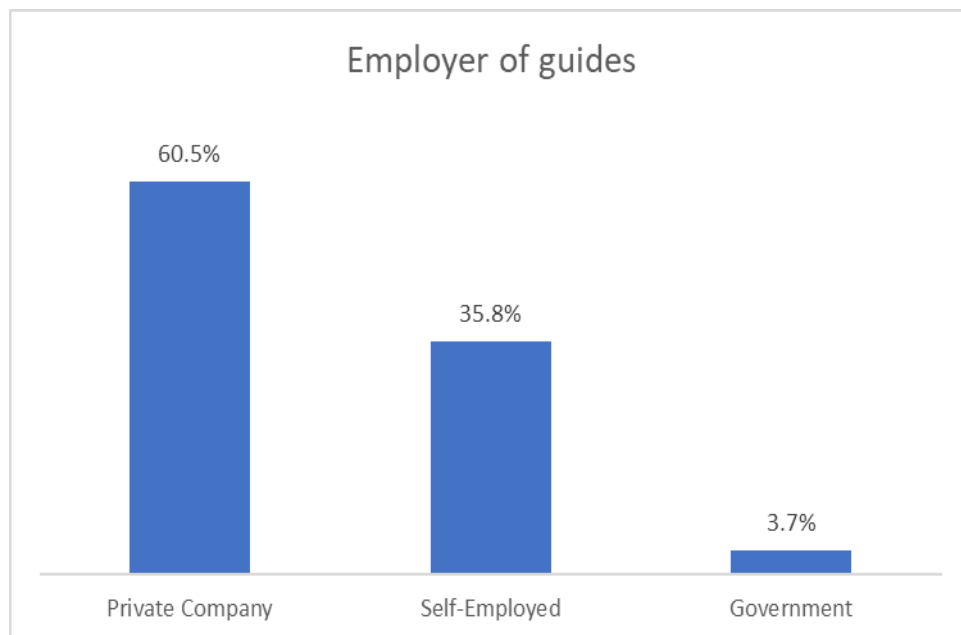


Figure 0.10: Employer of guides in Tanzania

Association membership of guides

Tour guides in Tanzania have many associations as shown in figure 4.12. Among the respondents, 25.5% were members of Tanzania Tour Guides Association, 9.1% from Kilimanjaro Tour Guides Association and 7.3% were members of Entrepreneurship Guide Society. Further, about 40% were not members of any tour guiding association (see figure 4.12).

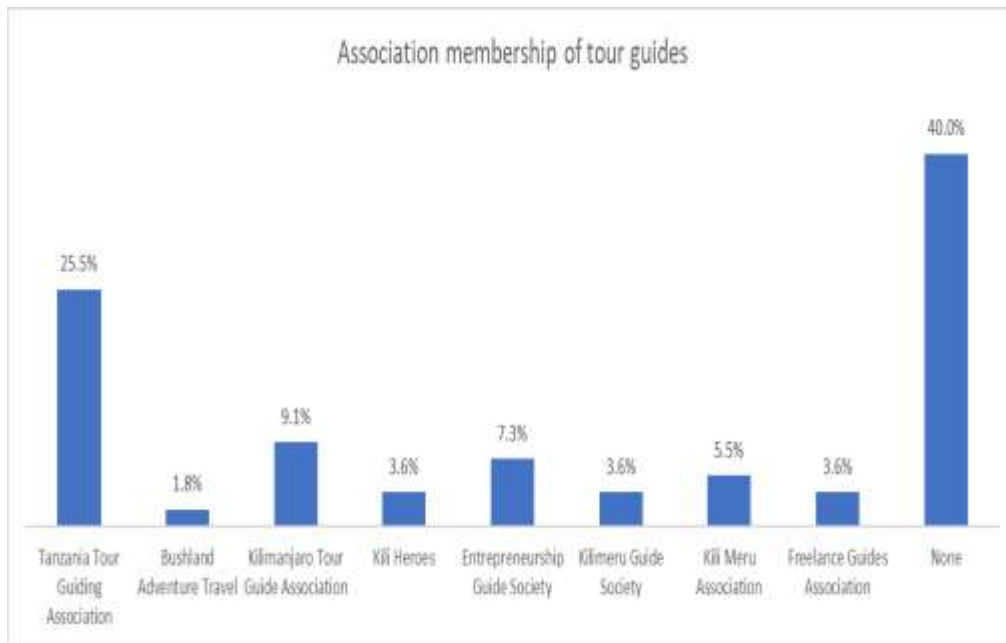


Figure 0.11: Tour guide association membership

Language Spoken by guides

The aim was to know the current practice of guide competence in terms of language. Thus, we asked guides to tick the languages they can communicate with tourist and the language they want to learn. Figure 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15 present the results found on guides language.

The survey showed that almost all tour guides in Tanzania can speak at least one foreign language (98.7%) (see figure 4.13).

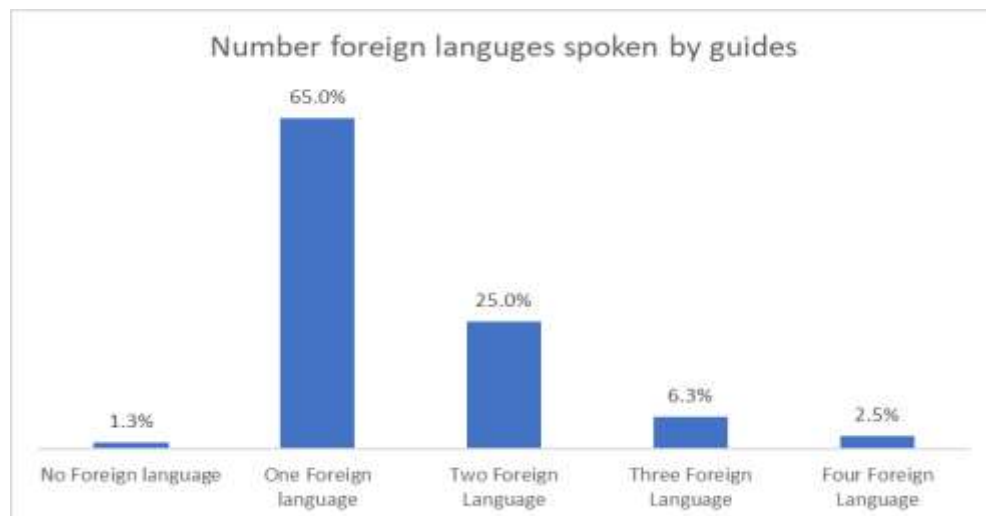


Figure 0.12: Number of foreign languages spoken by guide

The most spoken foreign language is English (96.3%) followed by French (17.3%), Spanish (16%) and German (9.9%) (see figure 4.14).



Figure 0.13: Languages spoken by guides

Further, guides would like to learn Chinese (47.5%), Germany (45.0%) and French (43.8%) (see figure 4.14)

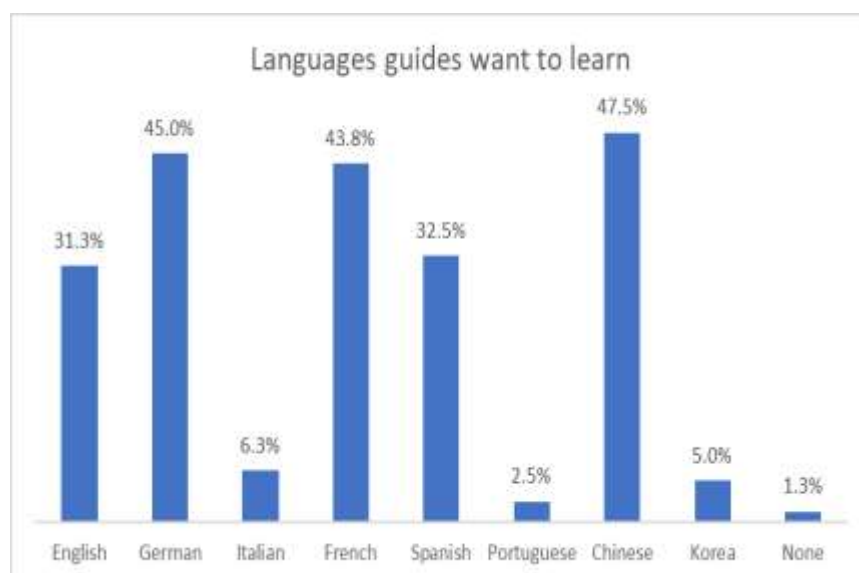


Figure 0.14: Languages the guides want to learn

Internet usage, access, and device

The aim was to understand the current practices that would help to decide what kind of portal should be developed in terms of data requirements and resolution. Therefore, we asked them the data plan they use per week, the methods and device they used to access the internet and how do they prefer to communicate with tourists. Figure 4.15, 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18 present the results found.

Many guides (63%) use at least 1 GB of internet data per week (see figure 4.16).

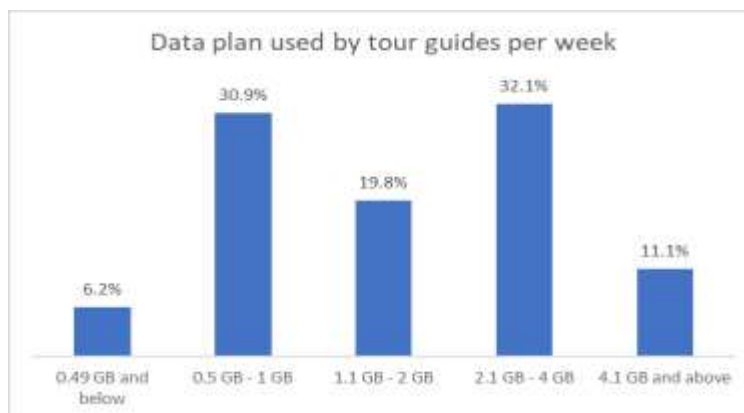


Figure 0.15: Data plan used by guides per week

They are using their own source of internet through smartphone (93.8%) (see figure 4.17).

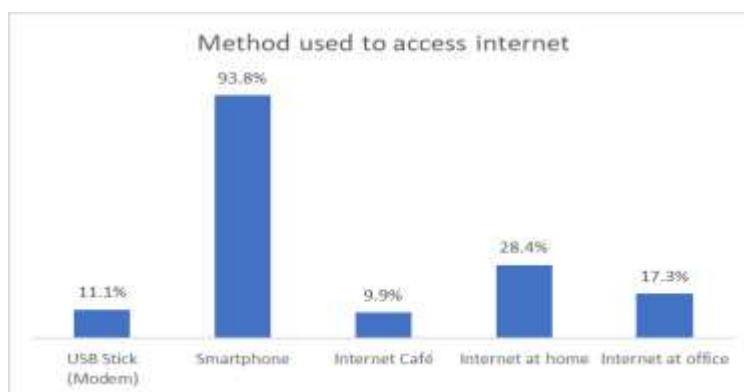


Figure 0.16: Methods used to access the internet

Guides are mostly using a smartphone (97.5%) and own laptop (43.2%) as their device to access the internet (see figure 4.18).

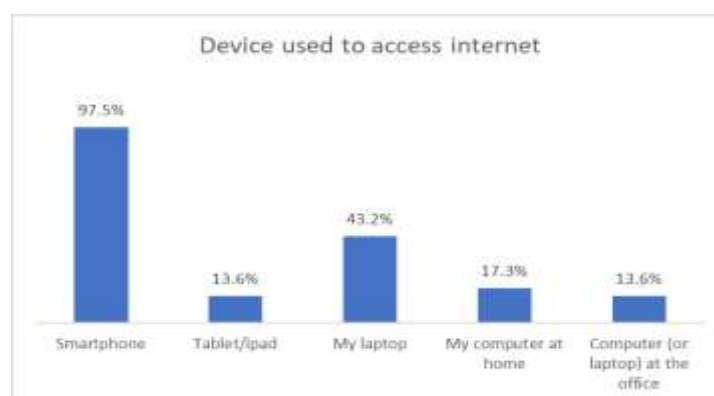


Figure 0.17: Devices used by the guide to access the internet

Correspondingly, many guides would like to use email (83.8%) and WhatsApp (76.3%) to communicate with tourists (see figure 4.19).

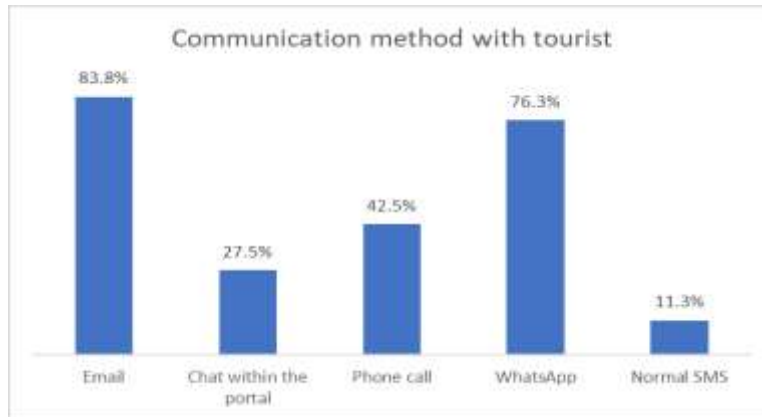


Figure 0.18: Communication method with tourist

Features of the portal

To understand more features of the portal, we asked our respondents to suggest the features they would like to use in the portal. Figure 4.20 and 4.21 present the results found.

The results show that most guides prefer discussion forum (64.2%), learning library (61.7%), job opportunities announcements (60.5%), tourist destination information (48.1%), direct communication with tourists (46.9%), license application (44.4%), searching for material (43.2%), chat room (42%) and profile management (40.7%) (see figure 4.20).

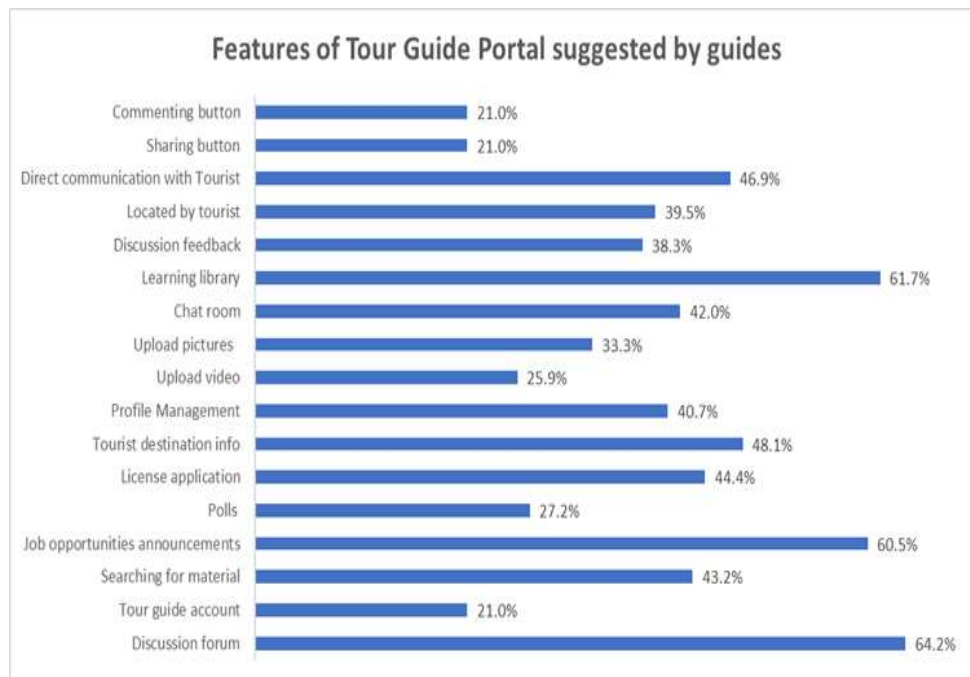


Figure 0.19: Portal features suggested by guides

Contrarily, the tourists would prefer to search for a tour guide (69.1%), check guide competence (69.1%), discussion forum (61.8%), tourist destination info (60%), check guide license (58.2%), rate and recommend tour guide (54.5%), direct communication with tour guide (52.7%) and like feature (43.6%) (see figure 4.21).



Figure 0.20: Portal features suggested by tourists

Challenges faced by tour guides and tourist

Furthermore, we asked both tourist and guides to select the challenges they are facing from the list of challenges. Figure 4.22 and 4.23 present the results found.

The result showed that the guides complain about poor payment from employer (65.7%), lack of training opportunities (55.7%), lack of common platform (54.3%) and competition with untrained guides (42.5%) (see figure 4.22).



Figure 0.21: Challenges faced by tour guides

Whereas tourist reported that wildlife knowledge (55%) and language problems (37.5%) were the major issues the guides need to improve (see figure 4.23).

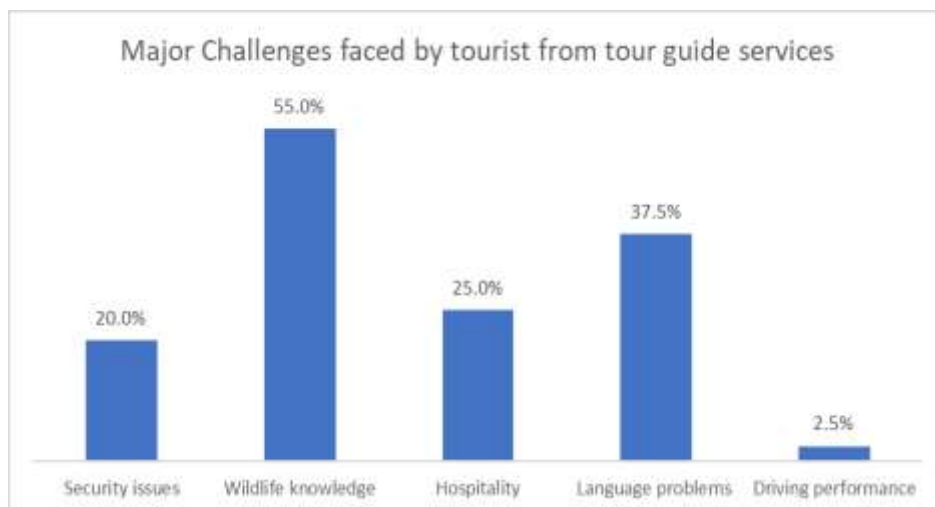


Figure 0.22: Major challenges faced by tourist to tour guide

Advantages of tour guide portal

To get a perception from guides whether the portal will be useful to them, we asked them to select advantages of the portal. Figure 4.24 presents the results.

Guides believe that the portal will improve their guiding work both in quality (59.8%) and volume (52.1%). It will increase bonds among guides (60.2%), simplify the licensing and registration process (55.1%) and consequently, will increase the volume of tourists visiting Tanzania (see figure 4.24).

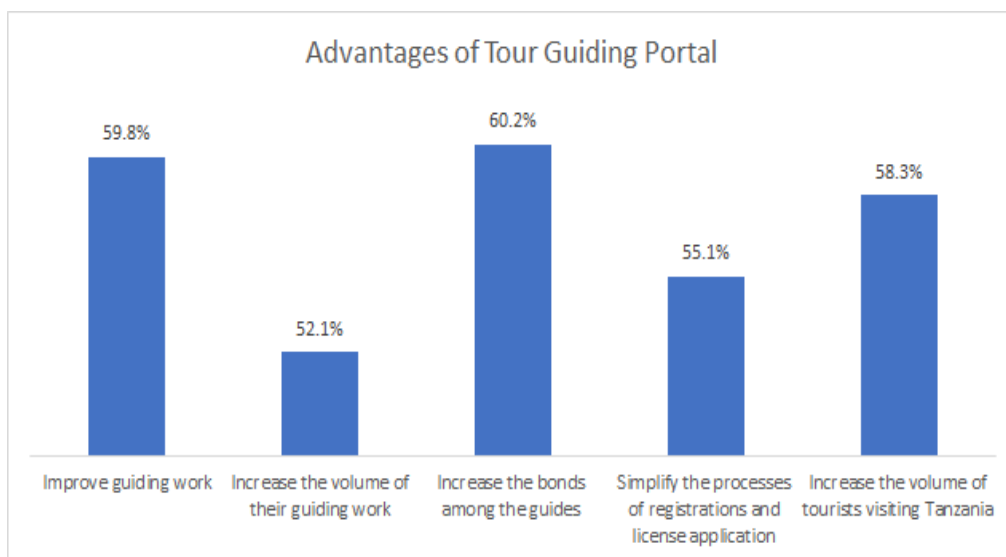


Figure 0.23: Advantages of the portal

Results from Interview

The following paragraphs summarise the findings from the interview.

Current Practice and professionalism of tour guides

There are about 5000 tour guides in Tanzania, most of them are located in tourist cities of northern circuit. Some of these guides are registered in different tour guide associations spread throughout the country. Those who are not members of any association claimed that the associations do not

add any value to their guiding work. Since there is neither single umbrella association for all tour guides nor a common platform, it is difficult to disseminate information to all tour guides and even harder to impose professional rules and guidelines that would enhance professionalism. Currently, tour guides are using WhatsApp groups which also has limitation in the number of members in one group.

Recently, the URT, through the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) has developed a common curriculum for TG in the country. Through this curriculum, TG will be awarded National Technical Awards (NTA) levels 4, 5 and 6. Table 4.1 summarises the NTA levels, credits, awards and competence levels. Unfortunately, unlike other professions, the higher NTA levels 7, 8, 9 and 10 for tour guiding profession, which corresponds to higher diploma, bachelor degree, master's degree, and doctorate respectively are not yet been offered by any training institution in Tanzania. Only two higher learning institutions are offering at bachelor level the tourism management, wildlife management, and wildlife tourism degree courses. These bachelor courses include a tour guiding module totalling about 90 credits to equip these students to work as tour guides.

Table 0.1: NTA Level awards with competences

NTA Level	Minimum Credits	Award	Competence Level Descriptors
NTA Level 4	120	Basic Technician Certificate	Apply knowledge and skills at a routine level
NTA Level 5	120	Technician Certificate	Apply knowledge and skills in a range of routine and non-routine activities which assume operational responsibilities
NTA Level 6	240	Ordinary Diploma	Apply knowledge and skills in a broad range of mostly non-routine work activities

Source: (NACTE, 2010)

Currently, the TG in Tanzania are neither licensed nor certified since the MNRT is still preparing the licensing and certification system of TG. Nevertheless, CAWM in collaboration with Kilimanjaro National Park (KINAPA) is offering specialized mountain tour guiding course and issuing temporary licenses to successfully mountain guides.

Professionalism enhancement through the development of tour guide portal

Some guides commented that the introduction of the portal is a good idea for sustainable tourism development in Tanzania. It will unify all tour guides in a single platform and provide the means of easy identification of unprofessional guides. With the use of the portal, it will be easy for TG to register and apply for licenses. Some TG believed that the introduction of the portal will reward the professional guides by receiving positive recommendations from their tourists.

Tourists were happy with the portal as they will be able to know the competence of TG in different tourist activities such as city tour, cultural tour, and mountain trekking. Furthermore, they recommended the features such as guide rating, checking guide competence and availability.

Results from document review

We reviewed the necessary legal documents dealing with tour guides and found that for a person to be a TG he/she must be a Tanzanian of at least 21 years of age, has completed form four, must hold a certificate of first aid and possess adequate knowledge of an area requested for (URT, 2008).

The Tourism (Tour Guide) regulation explains in detail how a guide is registered, licensed and conducts his guiding operations. It further elaborates that the Director of Tourism under the responsible ministry will maintain the registered TG records. In addition, the TG must be enlisted in the relevant association including guides associations and tour operators (MNRT, 2015).



Discussion

The findings from the demography show that the TG profession is mostly practiced by young men aged below 40 years. This might be due to either gender/age stereotypes among Tanzanians or existing work culture in Tanzania. Similarly, Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2013) in Zimbabwe, Alani and Khan (2017) in Oman and Okello and Kipruto (2017) in Kenya affirm the existence of more young men in tour guiding profession.

The study has additionally found that the majority of TG are holders of either certificate or diploma. Similarly, the same finding was reported by Melubo and Buzinde (2016) for TG in Tanzania. The observation that Tanzania has many certificate and diploma courses in tourism than those of degree courses (NACTE, 2019, TCU, 2018, VETA, 2019, Anderson, 2015) might contribute to this finding. However, Alani and Khan (2017) argued that society does not consider tour guiding as either prestigious or decent job, therefore, many bachelor holders do something else apart from guiding work. Nonetheless, TG skills such as site interpretation skills, interpersonal skills and problem-solving are important in tourist experience (Huang et al., 2010, Yu et al., 2002), hence, TG need further training (Sezgin and Duz, 2018). This argument is supported by the majority of surveyed guides who suggested learning library feature and the ability to search for learning material to be included in the TG portal.

Further, the findings show that almost all guides can speak at least one foreign language and only 33% can speak more than two foreign languages; and the dominant foreign language is English. Furthermore, Ap and Wong (2001) argued that communication skills and language proficiency are among the qualities of tour guiding profession. However, it is difficult to establish the language proficiency levels of these guides whether it is beginner, elementary, intermediate or proficient. The fact that 31.3% of surveyed guides want to learn English and moreover 37.5% of surveyed tourists complained about language problems of a guide, this, therefore, proves that it is important to establish language understanding levels of TG. Henceforth, the introduction of the portal will manage the establishment, not only the number of languages the guide can speak but also the language understanding levels.

The study revealed there are strings of challenges faced by guides in Tanzania. These include poor payment from the employer, lack of training opportunities, lack of common platform, competition from untrained guides and difficulties in the registration process. These results concur with the study done by Melubo and Buzinde (2016) who pointed out some challenges including low salaries from locally owned operators, improper training and poor health insurance coverage among guides in Tanzania. It is important to realize that most of these challenges were also reported by other authors in other countries. For instance, Chowdhary and Prakash (2008a) enumerated poor remuneration and insufficient training in India; Mak et al. (2010) in Macau, China, mentioned inadequate payment among TG and Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2013) reported low payment and unattainable training curricular and opportunities among guides in Zimbabwe.

It was further found that there are many tour guiding associations in Tanzania. Most of these associations are based on localities, friendship, and employers. This finding confirms another finding that there is no common platform among guides in Tanzania and that a discussion forum feature within the portal can alleviate the problem. Common platform or tour guiding professional body is among the environment that fosters professionalism (Black and Ham, 2005)

Additionally, this study has found that most TG in Tanzania are experienced. Indeed, according to Alani and Khan (2017) experience is very important for the professionalism of TG. In the same line, Tanzania Tour Guide Regulation requires a guide to have experience of at least one year to be licensed (MNRT, 2015). Nonetheless, the findings also show that there is almost a quarter of

guides who have experience of less than one year. Therefore, the authors suggest that inexperienced guide can work as a trainee under an experienced guide in order to acquire the required experience. Further, the TG Portal can assist to manage these processes.

Moreover, this study finds that the majority of TG owns a smartphone and they are using it to access the internet. Furthermore, most of them are using more than 1 GB of internet data per week. These findings concur with the TCRA (2018) which reported the massive penetration of internet usage and that mobile communication and internet services have massively increased in Tanzania. Therefore, these findings confirm that guides can interact with the online portal through both smartphone and private computer.

Findings have shown that tourist would like to check for guide competence, to rate and recommend TG and to be able to search for a TG through the portal. Moreover, many authors agree that product knowledge, language proficiency, and experience are necessary ingredients of competence (Alani and Khan, 2017, Ap and Wong, 2001, Sezgin and Duz, 2018). However, with the evolution of social media, public rating and recommendation are considered and trusted by many customers as the informer of competence (Racherla and Friske, 2012, Kim and Arguello, 2017, Hlee et al., 2018, Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019). Furthermore, although Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) has good rules and procedures of filing complaints against unprofessional TG, however, according to Salazar (2012) some tourists filed a formal complaint regarding incompetent TG which did not reach TTB. Thus, this raises an alarm that the management of tour guides through the portal is of paramount importance.

Proposed Solution

Current System vs Proposed System

Figure 5.1 shows the current system and figure 5.2 shows the proposed system.

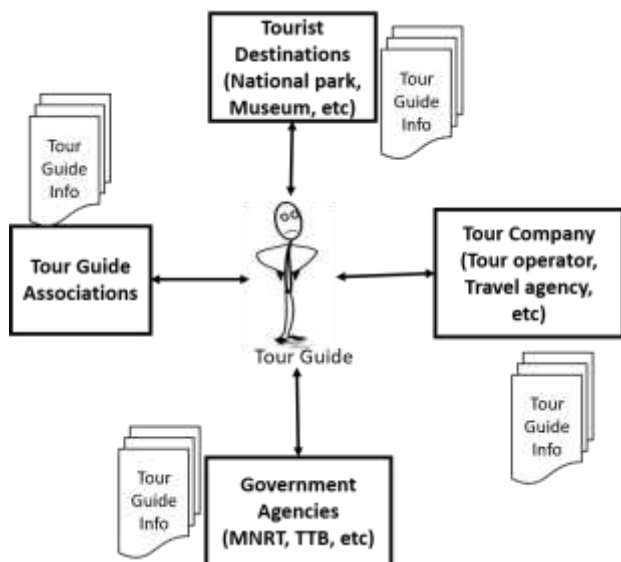


Figure 0.1: Current system

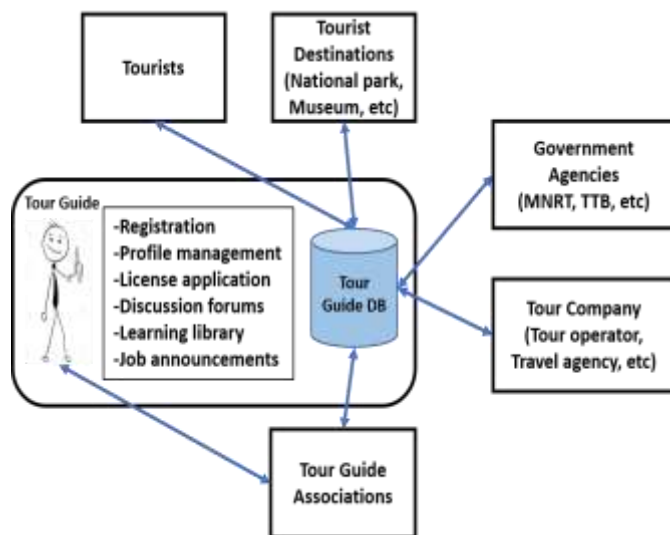


Figure 0.2: Proposed system

The current system is manual. As shown in figure 5.1, the TG has to visit all entities in order to submit his information, be for registration or some kind of application. This process, however, is costly, time-consuming and contain duplicate TG data. Moreover, tourist depends on the existing entities to access the TG, they cannot directly access the TG.



Whereas in the proposed system, as shown in figure 5.2, all TG data are stored in a single database with a secured system for entering and retrieving data. All entities can access the same database and hence there is no duplication and it is easier to verify the identification of a TG. Furthermore, tourist can access TG and he can easily rate, comment and recommend this TG.

Professionalism enhancement

In tour guiding profession, as in all other professions, regulations alone without enforcement do not help to enhance professionalism among TG (Tsegaw and Teressa, 2017). With the proposed system, it will be easier to enforce regulations set by the government such as licensing procedures, certification, and training. The government can retrieve from the portal the training needs of TG and plan what should be the contents of the next training. TG can learn and update themselves through the learning library found in the portal. Indeed, TG will be accountable since they know they are going to be reviewed by their customers. Furthermore, tourists can choose the kind of guides they need depending on the language capability and activity they are going to perform. The proposed system will, therefore, facilitate the enhancement of professionalism such that users can validate the guides' product knowledge, attitude towards work, communication skills, and experience.

Conclusions

The findings of this study have expounded the current practices of TG in Tanzania. They have shown that most TG are young men, aged under 40 years and holders of certificate and diploma of various courses mostly tour guiding operations. Most of them are experienced however, they are in need of further training especially in wildlife, environment conservation, business planning, and marketing and promotions. Furthermore, the study has revealed that though all guides can speak English, however, the language proficiency level needs to be established for the benefits of promoting tourism in Tanzania. Importantly, the guides themselves would like to improve and learn more languages in order to expand their customer base.

Despite the presence of many experienced guides in Tanzania, the study has revealed that there are some few unprofessional guides who practice in guiding work. These unprofessional guides are distorting the image of tourism in Tanzania since their mistakes propagate everywhere through social media. Furthermore, there is no single organ such as a professional body among TG which would help to identify these unprofessional guides.

The study has shown that various tourism stakeholders rely on UGC to retrieve reliable and trustworthy information. For example, 64.2% of TG and 61.8% of tourists would prefer discussion forum in the portal so as to discuss various topics. Meanwhile, 54.5% of tourists preferred the online review feature in order to rate and recommend competencies of the TG. Furthermore, 60.5% of TG would like the job opportunities to be posted in the portal by tour operators.

The findings imply that a TG portal is an important tool for managing TG in Tanzania and enhancing their professionalism. Apart from registrations and license application, the proposed portal will connect all TG in their associations which will create a conducive environment for the formation of the professional body. In line with this, the proposed portal can be used by the Government and its agencies to retrieve updated statistics of TG such as their number, their qualifications, their training needs, etc. and therefore plan strategies of developing tourism. Furthermore, the proposed portal will include features that would enable different kinds of users



such as tourists, tour guides, and tour companies to generate contents that will be consumed by other users of the portal.

Henceforth, due to the current practices of TG in Tanzania, this paper recommends the development of TG portal in order to enforce the professionalism of TG in Tanzania.

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